

A Gen Z seller's quest to bring his traditional business of handloom products online

A city flourishing along the banks of the Ganges in Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi is a perfect symphony of spirituality, culture and craft — with handloom products being one of its mainstays. Amidst its narrow winding lanes and bustling ghats lives 23-year-old Warraque Ahmed.

“Our family has had a handloom since it was first introduced in Varanasi — during my grandfather’s time. My father really focused on this as a business, and my brothers and he have been weaving sarees and selling them across Maharashtra, Surat, Bengaluru, Alwar and more. I have always wanted to join my family business, but not in the same way,” says Warraque.

Read on to know how he is giving a competitive digital edge to his traditional family business.

Offering a traditional business a digital boost

Even before he was a young graduate studying economics, Warraque knew that he was to join his brothers and uphold the legacy of the family, which includes his dad, mom and five siblings.

Fully immersed in creating traditional handloom products for more than two decades, they know the ins and outs of their craft. His family not only runs their own jacquard loom but also works with over 20 other artisans who dye the silk and weave it as per specifications.

“I got into the business to help my family. I wanted to try taking our products online. I made my Flipkart ID in 2022, but started selling only a year later when I learnt more about e-commerce” says Warraque.

It was in 2023 that he and his father were invited to attend a meeting about the Flipkart Samarth program in Varanasi. Attending it was an eye-opener for the young entrepreneur. “I met experts who explained how Flipkart supports those selling handloom products. There was a lot to learn about how to get orders, how to do business online and how to deal with payments and returns,” he says.

The Flipkart Samarth program empowers weavers and artisans by offering them a pan-India market, enabling them to preserve their traditional craftsmanship. It also facilitates training, offers technology support, and decodes market insights, helping family businesses like Warraque’s flourish in the digital marketplace.

“As members of this program, we pay lower delivery fees. We also get help with photoshoots and other aspects,” he says. Bolstered by this support, Warraque started to sell online in earnest from October 2023.

Weaving together success and satisfaction with Flipkart

“We create our own designs by hand, and then we send them to the weavers. After that we fit the designs to the machines,” he explains. When Warraque started out on Flipkart, he listed about 40 designs and at first, got 2-4 orders.

Realizing that the demand was higher for certain colors, Warraque slowly started to understand what consumers wanted. Soon, he expanded his listing and online sales started to cross 10 orders a day. With a little experience under his belt, he soon understood the ideal price points. Today, he has started to enjoy the process of digital commerce.

“This is a labor of love for my family and there is good growth online with orders reaching 15 a day. Currently, we only sell sarees but I want to start selling suits, dupattas and scarves too.”

Upping the ante: Warraque’s promising vision

“As this is our first year with Flipkart, we are gaining valuable experience. I believe we are in the training phase. So far, we are doing good thanks to the Flipkart Samarth program. We have good production quality so we can grow our business further,” he says.

Being relatively new in the online market, Warraque hopes the Big Billion Days open up a huge potential for his handloom products. For him, growth not only means preserving his family’s legacy but also offering sustainable livelihood opportunities to artisans in his community – a true win-win.

How this online whizzkid from Assam went full throttle with e-commerce at 19

Ranjit Shah's interest in e-commerce was ignited back in 2016 when he was able to access free internet. Based in Howly, a town in the Barpeta district of Assam with a population of less than 16,000, Ranjit was certain of one thing: digital commerce was the future.

While other college students pursued high-paying jobs to go from Howly's small-town charm to high rises in metros, Ranjit had a different ambition. "My classmates ran after jobs, but I didn't want that. I thought that whatever I do, I would do it myself. That's why I decided to do business and I knew it was going to be online," he says.

Read to know how he started an e-commerce business for men's and women's innerwear at the age of 19, epitomizing the spirit of entrepreneurship that drives youngsters across India to pursue their ambitions, no matter what.

Daring to dream

"We belong to a lower middle-class family of six – my mom and dad, elder brother and bhabhi and a younger sister. I have been interested in computers since childhood. We didn't have one at home, I used to visit a relative's place to use it – so often that they eventually chased me away!" says Ranjit.

Studying B. Com to learn finance management, Ranjit couldn't wait to get his own business off the ground. "I was 19 when I started with e-commerce – it was during the third semester of college. I was sitting in my brother's garment shop on Barpeta Road. I created a Flipkart account, clicked a picture of kids' clothes and uploaded it.

I got 11-12 orders. I did not even open the panel and check. Then I got a call from Flipkart, to inform me that I was getting a lot of orders, and to check why I wasn't accepting them. That's how my journey started."

Since Ranjit was still in college, he couldn't give the business his all. His next few hurdles were overcoming both the knowledge and capital gap.

Mom and YouTube to the rescue

"I didn't know how to sell stuff on Flipkart. No one in my family knows much about e-commerce or even digital technology. So, I watched hours of videos on YouTube," says Ranjit. When he explained his business plan of selling men and women's innerwear online to his family, friends and relatives, support didn't come easy.

“Only my mother believed in me. After she convinced my father and I requested him day after day, he finally gave me ₹50,000. I got another ₹50,000 from a family friend,” he says. With a capital of ₹1 lakh and motivation from his girlfriend Rinki, this self-taught entrepreneur got going.

Sourcing products from across Assam and Kolkata, he worked out of his own room. Without any staff to help, his mother and father helped him pack his first few orders.

Finding his niche on e-commerce

Like any other business owner, Ranjit made mistakes at first. He sourced products of low quality and found they didn’t meet consumer demand.

“Flipkart’s seller support team helped me a lot. With their guidance I tried to find something unique to stand out online. When I was selling bras, I noticed that sellers only sell packs of 3 or 6. So, I filled the gap with packs of 4 and packs of 5,” he explains. Soon, orders started pouring in.

“At that time, I got 200 orders a day and I used to think I was doing well. Then the lockdown happened. I was amazed to see my orders increase. Now, I get 1500 orders a day on average!” During the Big Billion Days sale, he clocks in 5,000 orders a day, and his revenue grows 4X.

By manufacturing 80% of what he sells online, Ranjit is able to control quality and keep costs low. Understanding consumer demand has also helped Ranjit’s sales skyrocket.

“My revenue last year was ₹7 crore, and I never thought I’d reach here. Due to the growth I got through Flipkart, everyone supports me now. Even my relatives who now sell on Flipkart come to take my advice,” he says.

In 2023, at just 28 years of age, he not only added a floor to his home that is dedicated to his e-commerce business, but also constructed 3 more floors, bought land and a car. “We have a transport office in town where goods from Kolkata and other places are brought. There was an event there and they asked me to attend as the Chief Guest. That was my proudest moment.”

What Ranjit is most excited about is tying the knot with Rinki in 2025 and growing the business even more. “I want to double what I am selling now. I also want to explore other categories like womenswear. What I want to tell others who want to explore e-commerce is simple: don’t copy other sellers. Success will come when you offer something unique.”

Embracing love, embracing self: Madhubala & Punnu's story of pride

Meet Madhubala Shukla and Punnu Choudhary, a couple whose journey embodies the essence of Pride month – a celebration of love, resilience, and the courage to live authentically. Their story is not just about overcoming societal barriers, but about embracing who they are and finding solace and strength in each other's arms.

Finding Oneself – Punnu's journey

My name is Punnu Choudhary, and I hail from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. Growing up, I never quite felt like I fit into the mold society expected of me. I was born a girl, but inside, I always identified as a boy. It took time for me to come to terms with this truth, to understand who I really was, especially in a world where conformity is often valued above all else.

After completing my B.A. in Hindi, I found myself working for the first time in Gujarat, in a private limited company. It was a new experience, navigating the corporate world while grappling with my own identity. But it wasn't until I met Madhubala in 2019 that everything started to change.

Madhubala and I instantly became close friends. As our friendship flourished, it naturally transitioned into a deep love. Throughout it all, we've been each other's pillars of support. Madhu, in particular, has been my rock, standing by me tirelessly as I struggled through my challenges.

We decided to apply for work in Chennai and soon shifted. Here, I came across a transman, an HR at the company. He introduced us to the concept of gender-affirming surgery. I had known since childhood that I wanted to transition, to become the person I always knew I was inside. With Madhu's unwavering support, I took the courageous step towards undergoing the surgery in 2021.

The road to transformation wasn't easy. There were physical pains, emotional hurdles, and the daunting task of gaining acceptance from my family. Initially, my mother struggled to understand and accept my decision. She feared for my future and believed I was making a mistake. But with time, as she witnessed my unwavering determination and saw the positive changes in my life, she began to come around, albeit slowly.

My elder brother still finds it difficult to accept me, but my sister stood by me from the beginning. Her support was a constant source of strength, especially during the challenging moments. As for Madhu, she became my rock, my confidante, and eventually, my partner in life. We married in 2021, a decision born out of love and necessity, as Madhu faced familial pressures of her own.

In 2023, we decided to apply at Flipkart's fulfillment center in Haryana. We both started working as Data Entry Operators. We found solace and acceptance at Flipkart that was missing from other places. Here, we were not just tolerated but embraced for who we are. I really like working here. And while the journey hasn't been without its challenges, I am grateful for the opportunity to live authentically.

Looking towards the future, I dream of opening my own restaurant, a place where I can share my passion for food and hospitality with others. It's a dream that was once unimaginable but now feels within reach, thanks to the love and support of those who have stood by me every step of the way.

Embracing Change – Madhubala's journey

I am Madhubala Shukla and I am from Raebareilly, Uttar Pradesh. I finished my graduate studies in Hindi. After college, I found a job at a company in Gujarat. This is where I met Punnu. At the time, we were staying together in a hostel. As we got to know each other, we realized that we wanted to be together.

During this time, family and society objected to two women being together. However, we decided to move forward regardless of the challenges. We shifted to Chennai and met some incredible people here who belonged to the LGBTQIA+ community. I started to learn more about the people from the community. Until then I really didn't know much about it as I hail from a small town. This helped me support Punnu in his journey of transition as well.

Both Punnu and I made many friends. Connecting with others like us brought a sense of relief we hadn't known before.

I have worked in multiple states by now, and one thing that I truly like is meeting new people and trying to learn about them. It helps me expand my understanding of the world and live a more expansive life. Even as an introvert, these interactions have helped me grow and embrace new aspects of life.

When I am not engrossed in my work or meeting and learning about people, I spend my time singing. I also create Instagram reels. Punnu helps me manage my account.

We joined Flipkart last year as Data Entry Operators. When we joined, there were others from the LGBTQIA+ community who were working here. All of us became really good friends. It finally felt great to truly belong.

Flipkart Immerse: Your AI sidekick in the quest for perfect purchases!

In the ever-evolving landscape of e-commerce, technology continues to push boundaries, making online shopping experiences more intuitive and engaging for users. One such advancement is the introduction of the multi-modal search feature, which leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance the way customers search for products. Gone are the days of traditional text-based searches as users can now combine images and text prompts to find exactly what they're looking for. In this article, learn how Flipkart is integrating this feature to give its customers exactly what they want.

Not long ago, searching for information meant typing a few keywords into a search engine and sifting through pages of results. In other words, being confined to expressing our desires and inquiries through the limitations of the written language and literacy levels, typing out our thoughts one keystroke at a time.

But what if there was a better way to search for information?

Multi-modal search seamlessly integrates various modalities – text, images, audio, or video – providing precise access to the information or content one seeks.

Unveiling the vision

Let's go back a bit — it's 2023. The buzzword is generative AI. A few months before, in November 2022, Sam Altman-led OpenAI had launched ChatGPT-3, an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot built on top of OpenAI's foundational large language models (LLMs). In the blink of an eye, GPT-3 takes over the world of technology, enabling personalized access to information like never before. While earlier models existed, GPT-3 allowed direct interaction with ChatGPT, showcasing its immense potential. This direct engagement revealed the technology's profound impact, foreshadowing its future significance.

Around this time, Flipkart was preparing for its yearly hackathon – a 2-day dynamic event where Flipsters come together to unbox innovative ideas aimed at enhancing the shopping experience for every Flipkart customer. Themed GenAI Innovation Days, the 2023 hackathon centered on harnessing the power of generative AI to provide the Flipkart users with personalized shopping journeys.

Senior Data Scientist Surbhi Mathur and her team, inspired by the recent revolution of AI and its potential, embarked on a quest to redefine the online shopping experience using AI technology.

“During the hackathon, my team and I brainstormed ideas to enhance the shopping experience for our users. We developed the idea of introducing multimodal search to allow users to progressively

build their shopping journey using both visual and text inputs simultaneously. We modeled this as an image retrieval problem, where the query consists of a seed image accompanied by a relative text input describing the desired changes from the seed image. As the query was composed of both image and text, we chose a multimodal model architecture like Contrastive Language–Image Pre-training (CLIP) from OpenAI, which embeds image and text in the same space. We demonstrated a working prototype of this idea during the hackathon and won first place. Building on this success, we fine-tuned the model on e-commerce distribution to create FK-CLIP, significantly improving the concept understanding,” says Surbhi.

The result? Flipkart’s own AI-powered search feature Immerse that allows a seamless fusion of text and image search capabilities.

“Put it simply, imagine how an Indian shopper shops at stores. They start with something they like, then keep refining it. Like if they see a red dress but want it with long sleeves or in polka dots. They tell the shopkeeper, who helps them find what they want. This is precisely what Immerse aims to replicate in the realm of online shopping,” says Aradhya Saxena, Senior Product Manager, Flipkart.

Immerse won the hearts of the hackathon judges and, after meticulous testing and viability, was integrated into the Flipkart platform in no time. “We won the hackathon and a beta version of the feature went live on the Flipkart app before The Big Billion Days Sale in 2023. From what we learned in the user studies, people really liked this feature. They get what it does and see how it’s different from basic filters,” adds Surbhi.

Engineering the Backbone

Krishna Azad Tripathi, Software Development Engineer, has been working with the Flipkart’s search semantics team since 2018. Over the course of 6 years, Krishna has closely witnessed the development of the search feature at Flipkart and how the user needs determined the trajectory of the feature.

“In the early stages of our project, we relied on a lexical-based approach for search, focusing on exact matches between user queries and our product catalog. As we evolved, we transitioned towards a click-based model, leveraging clickstream data to better understand user intent,” explains Krishna.

From the click-based model the search team soon adopted a demand-based approach, using data from high-demand products or categories. When posed by the limitations of this model – unable to process low-query demands – the team pivoted towards a hybrid approach of combining text-based and click based data. However, when the idea of Immerse burst into the scene, the team found a potential game changer.

“If we fail to showcase good products, users won’t find what they’re looking for, impacting our search performance. To tackle this, we’re prioritizing the development of Immerse. The aim is to improve search quality and to enhance our understanding of user intent and deliver better results in both the short and long term,” adds Krishna.

Flipkart’s journey into generative AI technology began with the introduction of Flippi, its AI-powered shopping chat assistant. Also built using strong AI and machine learning (ML) models, Flippi offers product discovery through a conversational experience, accompanied by intuitive nudges. From there on, Flippi aids in decision-making through intelligent recommendations, providing a holistic shopping process for users.

The Way Forward

Currently, Immerse runs on predefined prompts. Surbhi explains, “For example, on top of a product image, you can apply prompts like “yellow” if the product is gray. You can apply prompts to change the color, pattern, and more. These prompts we’re showing you are predefined and limited in variety and number.” The team understands the need for expansion and is working on solving this challenge to help users experience more visual variety while browsing products.

Immerse represents more than just a search tool – it signifies a revolutionary leap in the way users navigate online shopping. By seamlessly integrating text and image search capabilities, Immerse empowers users to explore products intuitively, just as they would in a physical store. As a pioneer of adopting multi-modal search in the Indian e-commerce space, Flipkart sets a new industry standard, ushering in a future where informed buying decisions are effortless and every search is an adventure in discovery.

How Mohammed Imran Leverages Flipkart to preserve Saharanpur's Wood Craft Legacy

Mohammed Imran, a Flipkart Seller and Samarth partner based in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur, has dedicated over a quarter century to his wood crafts business, Unique Arts Shoppe. Transitioning from embroidery to woodwork in 1997, he embraced the guidance of a friend to turn to entrepreneurship. Today, with e-commerce, the business supports local artisans as it soars to new heights. Read to know how he did it.

Wood crafts and Saharanpur, a small town in western UP, have been synonymous since time immemorial. Wooden handicrafts produced here are known the world over, and generations of craftspersons have created a rich legacy in wood carving and carpentry.

In its maze of lanes and bylanes lives Mohammed Imran, who leverages Flipkart Samarth to preserve Saharanpur's cultural legacy and grow his entrepreneurial venture.

Combining his skill and that of other artisans with e-commerce, Mohammed Imran's business, Unique Arts Shoppe, enjoys pan-India demand. However, things didn't start out this way.

Finding the Right Grain

Mohammed Imran wasn't always into the wood crafts business. His story took this turn back in 1997. "I used to work on kadhai embroidery on ladies' suits before I got introduced to woodwork. When Chinese machinery entered the market, the demand for manual work fell. I couldn't afford the new machinery either, as they cost around ₹25 lakhs."

As fate would have it, Mohammed Imran ran into an old friend, Sarfaraz Alvi, who was in a handicrafts business that specialized in wood crafts. "He used to make export items in Mango wood. One day, when we met, he asked about work, I told him that it was not going well. He recommended that I work with him and learn woodwork."

Before Mohammed Imran took the leap, he consulted the one person he knew would help him find the right path. "I spoke to my mother, as she knew that I was worried about taking care of my family. She encouraged me to learn woodwork if I saw a future in it."

Chiseling Out a Niche

Driven by his responsibility as a husband and a son, Mohammed Imran put his mind to learning this new craft and soaked in everything he could. "I worked with Sarfaraz for one year. In this time, I learned how to cut wood, how to fit it and frame it, and make wood crafts. Once I got used to this work, I told him I wanted to start my own business."

Receiving nothing but support from Sarfaraz, Mohammed Imran wasted no time. “That’s when I ordered my machine as per my specifications. With nothing but our house to my name, I did what I had to. It was a 2-bedroom place – and I placed the new machine in one room to start my work.”

Sticking to the natural advantages of working with wood in Saharanpur, Mohammed Imran decided he wanted to use Mango wood only. “I am used to this wood as this is what I started out with. Mango wood is also popular, and we get it locally treated and seasoned for us.”

Imran crafts a variety of products from Mango wood, ranging from wooden coasters and trays to bedside tables, incense boxes, bed trays, photo frames, and numerous other home decor items.

Fast-forward a few years, and his work was mainly focused on fulfilling export commissions until 2018, when things changed yet again.

“A few friends of mine used to sell online while I was working offline on export orders, but I wasn’t satisfied with growth. On meeting them and discussing their work, I realized that they were doing good work online. So, I also decided to go online with Flipkart.”

Taking Wood Crafts Further and Building to Last

As is the case with any new venture, there were some growing pains for Imran’s budding business. “In 2018, I took the business online with my wife, but we couldn’t make much progress. The market was dull. A lot of the progress only came in when I started with Flipkart properly, less than two years ago.

Despite having 26 years of experience, Mohammed Imran knew that growing a business online meant learning new things. “In the beginning, orders were slow. We got 5-7 orders only, but now, it is increasing. We have reached 30-40 orders a day.”

Mohammed Imran credits his growth to the inputs of his Flipkart account manager and the dedicated team he has to handle the receipt of online orders, packaging and labeling. “It’s been a great experience so far. We receive instant support from our account manager. The handling of payments is also very clear, and we can see them all online, so we do not feel like we are in the dark.”

Today, Mohammed Imran’s wood crafts business generates an impressive yearly turnover. “After getting into e-commerce, we went from a handful of people to 15-20 artisans.

Right now, we are focused on decorative items and have around 200 products. But I want to introduce new items to the home décor and kitchenware sections, with the aim to launch a new brand specifically for my wife to look over.”

Fuelled by this goal, he leverages every opportunity that comes his way and is most excited when Flipkart’s Big Billion Days sale comes around. “During BBD, our orders increase substantially. We start preparing for BBD about a month in advance. It is a challenge, but it is worth it.”

For aspiring entrepreneurs, he has one piece of advice: patience. “For any new entrepreneurs, starting off can sometimes be a challenge. It takes time to build a business and there are chances of losses. To all those who are waiting for the right time, I would say, start your business – do not hesitate.”

Small Business, Big Dreams: A Flipkart Samarth seller's pursuit of growth and success

Veerafab, a textile brand rooted in Surat, is a fusion of traditional expertise and e-commerce prowess. Rathore Harishbhai and Pradeep Singh Shekhawat embarked on this journey during the pandemic in 2021, and their strategic move catalyzed Veerafab's success. As Flipkart Samarth sellers, the duo is maximizing the opportunities of e-commerce and advancing towards growth.

Small business

Surat-based Veerafab, a brand and small business in textiles, is the seamless integration of two visions: one powered by the wealth of experience in textile production and the other by the power and potential of e-commerce. Seemingly woven together by the threads of fate, both Rathore Harishbhai and Pradeep Singh Shekhawat have quite the story of success.

Stitches in time

It all started with an ordinary suggestion from Pradeep's father, recalls Harishbhai. "Pradeep bhai's family and mine live in the same society. One day, his father, who was in the B2B digital prints business, spoke to me about perhaps working together – of his son joining the dhanda. I have been in the embroidery fabric industry for over 12 years. In 2008, when opportunities in the diamond trade disappeared overnight due to the global downturn, I became an embroidery designer. It has now been 12 years since I expanded operations in the textile business."

It was during the pandemic, many years after Veerafab first came into existence, that the desire to go online took hold.

"During the pandemic, online sellers were doing well. Pradeep bhai told me that he believed our business could really thrive online. He suggested that we sell online so we don't have to go out to sell. Buyers would come to us instead. That was almost 3 years ago and once we onboarded as Flipkart Samarth sellers, we haven't looked back."

One meeting, a business pitch, and a handshake later, Veerafab took to the online markets via Flipkart Samarth.

The Flipkart Samarth program empowers artisans, weavers, and small businesses by providing them with a platform to showcase their products to a pan-India audience, fostering inclusive growth and economic empowerment across India's diverse communities. Through training, technology support, and market access, Flipkart Samarth enables these entrepreneurs to thrive in the digital marketplace, enabling sustainable livelihoods and cultural preservation.

Now handling the online operations, Pradeep sees to the steady online growth of Veerafab. “During the normal business days, we average about 40 to 50 orders per day. During Flipkart’s Big Billion Days sale, we get around 350 orders per day,” says Pradeep.

Specializing in embroidery as well as digital prints, Veerafab sells ethnic sets with styles that include Lucknowi chikankari, Jaipuri block prints and more from all over India. Today, a single design at Veerafab sells at least 1,500 pieces, and the duo is aiming much higher.

Tailoring the path to success online

For Harishbhai, the digital world of commerce was one shrouded in mystery. “I did not have any idea or understanding about what an online business was all about. I simply trusted Pradeep bhai when he said that if we can make it, why can’t we sell it online? I told him I didn’t know how it was done but I can get as much inventory as he wanted ready.”

With all the support he could want, Pradeep put his best foot forward and it showed. “Onboarding to Flipkart was the right move for our small business and it opened doors to new opportunities. Flipkart’s features help us analyze our growth, and we can check all the important statistics and metrics we need. Based on the product performance for a given size, we can better focus on products that sell. We also get feedback from Flipkart on ways to manage our inventory and improve,” says Pradeep.

Small business

“Flipkart keeps us profitable – someone from the account management team is always ready to discuss problems and offer solutions on a daily basis. Since we onboarded as Flipkart Samarth sellers, we have grown continuously and consistently. Working with Flipkart, honestly, is different – Alag maza aata hai!” says Harishbhai as he and his business partner strive to take his small business to new heights.

With the demand for Veerafab’s designs rising, the duo creates work opportunities for local artisans in the textile industry. With Flipkart Samarth, this dynamic partnership has all the tools it needs to thrive.

Buttoned up and raring to go

With two Flipkart BBD sales behind them, the duo is fine-tuning their approach and preparing for yet another successful year. “First BBD to second BBD, we got twice as much sales. We are now looking forward to triple our growth! I feel like this is just the start,” says Harishbhai, backed by an equally enthusiastic partner.

“I look forward to growth on Flipkart, more than what we have with the ethnic sets. I am currently working on getting a warehouse in different states so we can execute on our plans to expand to sarees soon. Embroidery sarees have a good demand in the market and will lead to growth on Flipkart,” says Pradeep as he gears up for the third BBD sale.

Singing my truth with pride: Lovejeet Singh's story

In the city of Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, a young transgender woman started to learn about herself and accept who she truly is. Following her heart and facing life head-on, Lovejeet Singh has created a better & stable life for herself and her loved ones, while also growing into her identity with pride. This is her story in her own words.

Pride

In a world where identity can feel like a battleground, I've walked a unique path as a transgender woman, facing struggles that shaped my journey from adversity to acceptance.

I am Lovejeet Singh. Growing up in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, life took an unexpected turn after completing my 12th. With my father's passing, I became the sole provider for my family – my younger sister, brother, and mother. I had to pull up my socks and find ways to take care of my family as I was left with no choice.

In the backdrop of these external challenges, I was going through a different kind of struggle – one that has been on my mind for years – my identity. Even as a child in school, I was always perplexed by myself. I would look at others and tell myself 'Why are others 'normal' while I feel so different?'

Hailing from a small town, I had no knowledge of different kinds of identities that exist in the world. It was only later when I started going outside of my town and learning more about people like me that I realized this is just who I am.

My father was a short-tempered man. So I wasn't able to share my struggle with my family fearing retaliation. It was after his death that I decided to tell the rest of my family about my truth. Initially I was met with resistance. My identity caused rifts, but over time, understanding and support replaced judgment and fear. Today all of them truly support me, especially my mother. However, with relatives, it's a different story.

As I was looking for a job, my friend, who is also a transgender woman, told me about doing Badai Mangna (the vocation of going to houses and blessing people for money, typically done by transgender persons in India) to make money. It was a cultural tradition that resonated with me, but it didn't provide the stability my family needed.

Pride

Then, a glimmer of hope emerged when a friend introduced me to Flipkart. Joining as a Packer in May 2023, I moved to the Flipkart fulfillment center in Haryana. The move felt safe, and I quickly

settled in because my colleagues were so welcoming. Here at Flipkart, I found not just a job but a community where harmony thrived. This was in stark contrast to the prejudice and hardships I'd faced before.

Yet, outside the safety of home or my new workplace, prejudice still rears its ugly head, reminding me that acceptance wasn't universal.

Music became my refuge through all of this, especially singing. Sharing my passion on social media through my Instagram account, became an outlet for self-expression.

Through it all, the most profound realization was finding clarity in my identity. As far as I am concerned, we only live one life. To battle for one's identity during this lifetime is just torture. I want to be who I am and just live my life accordingly.

Accepting myself as who I am brought a sense of liberation and confidence I'd never known before. Today, as I reflect on my journey, I find strength in the support of my family and the resilience I've built along the way. Though marriage may seem distant, nurturing my siblings fills me with purpose and joy. They are my children in every sense, and their happiness is my greatest reward.

In a world where acceptance can be hard-won, I've learned that the truest form of freedom comes from embracing oneself, unapologetically and without reservation. And in that realization, I've found my own peace amidst life's uncertainties.

Our customers say it with flowers: Flipkart's same-day flower delivery service sets hearts aflutter

It's been just over a month since the launch of Flipkart's flower delivery service, but it has already helped bonds blossom across India. Hear from customers who used this service on Valentine's Day and beyond, enjoying the convenience, speed and variety it offers.

The language of flowers is universal, bridging all gaps and laying emotions bare with fresh, fragrant blooms. Helping customers across India say it with flowers more easily than ever before, Flipkart's flower delivery service is all set to revolutionize the market.

With same-day delivery in more than 450 PIN codes across India, Flipkart's flower delivery service doesn't compromise on speed and accessibility. It doesn't skimp on choices either, allowing customers to choose from evergreen roses to other rare flowers like orchids.

Enhanced by its strong logistics network and affordable pricing that starts at just Rs. 249, this facility helps customers not only deliver a fragrant surprise to their loved ones but also create everlasting memories. Ever since its launch a week before Valentine's Day, Flipkart's flower delivery service has garnered immense appreciation. Here's what customers have to say.

Anand Pandey's Heartwarming Gesture

In a world often clouded by hustle and bustle, where gestures of genuine kindness can seem rare, stories like that of Anand Pandey's heartwarming surprise for his friend serve as reminders of the beauty of friendship and the power of thoughtful gestures. Anand's journey to brighten his friend's day began with a simple order of flowers on Flipkart.

"I found out about Flipkart's flower delivery service while browsing the site for flowers. I decided to order some for my friend for Valentine's Day," says Anand.

Anand had a fantastic experience. "The flowers were fresh, and I've already given them to the person I intended to," he remarks. Despite not being a frequent buyer of gifts and flowers, Anand was drawn to Flipkart for this special occasion. "Placing the order was straightforward, just like any other order on Flipkart," he explains, highlighting the convenience of the process.

Khushi Singh Gets A Floral Surprise

It was just a normal day when the doorbell rang, and when Khushi went to answer it, the world suddenly seemed like a brighter, happier place. There are some moments that stay with us forever, and there's nothing more special than getting flowers for the first time. And when it's a surprise, it can change a routine day into one that stays etched in our memory.

What Khushi had received was a single flower sent by a friend using Flipkart's flower delivery service. "It was memorable for me because it was the first time I received flowers ever, and it was a total surprise," she says.

Diwakar Jha Allows Flowers To Do The Talking

Flipkart's flower delivery service

With a wide selection of flowers and timely delivery, making someone's day is just a click away. That's exactly what Diwakar wanted to do when he got to know about Flipkart's flower delivery service while scrolling the website. Without wasting any time, Diwakar placed his order and sat back.

"I wanted to order some flowers for my friend, and it was really simple to do on Flipkart," he says. Choosing a convenient time from the four delivery slots offered by the online service, Diwakar was able to make his friend's day extra special. "What I liked was the delivery speed and freshness," he remarks.

Samridh Singh Prithvi Listens To His Heart On Rose Day

Big gestures that show what's in our heart is not everyone's cup of tea, and Samridh is not one who is big on showering his better half with gifts or flowers. But when this Rose Day came around, Samridh was surprised to find himself wanting to do something to show his love.

Going the classic route felt like the best way and Samridh found a seamless way to do it with Flipkart's flower delivery service. When he searched for fresh flowers on Flipkart and saw that it was indeed possible to get them delivered, he knew it was meant to be. "My wife would be the best person to share her experience but what I can say is that the flowers were packaged well and looked fresh."

FlipTrends 2023: Unboxing The Wishlists Of Indian Shoppers on Flipkart

The year 2023 was an unprecedented one for online shopping with Tier II & III cities filling their carts and leveraging e-commerce like never before. Shoppers cheered for homegrown brands while the evergreen saree continued to drape India in elegance. India's shopping choices veered towards health and selfcare too, with cycles and premium grooming products being some of the hottest picks! Read the FlipTrends 2023 to know more about the latest shopping trends that India set on Flipkart.

shopping trends

As we draw the curtain over the whirlwind year that was 2023, here's a look at some of the top online shopping trends that shaped the year. While The Big Billion Days 2023 offered a kaleidoscope of choices that drew a record number of 1.4 billion customer visits, India shopped all year round.

YouTube player

Creating new firsts that defined the digital commerce landscape, consumers were aided by innovations such as the Flipkart camera, Flippi, Voice Search, and lots more.

India's shopping spirit resonated with the diverse nature of our land, but our hearts thumped as one for Team India during the World Cup. When the demand for the blue jerseys soared, Flipkart sellers rose to the occasion to ensure every fan could wear blue proudly!

Read on to take a look at this and other buzzworthy shopping trends set by customers across India on Flipkart this year.

Tier II and III customers embrace the online family

India's tier II and III cities and towns are brewing a shopping revolution.

While cities such as Bengaluru and New Delhi topped the list of metropolitan shoppers' chart, Thiruvananthapuram, Patna, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Varanasi, Ernakulam, Guwahati, Cuttack, Medinipur, and Bankura were some of the top tier-1, 2 and 3 cities that had the busiest shopping carts this year. The Flipkart platform also witnessed over 41 million new customers up until November 2023.

India aspires to look good, feel good!

Draping India in elegance, Flipkart became the chosen saree destination in India. The evergreen saree set trends as the most-shopped product on Flipkart. Women's clothing across ethnic,

contemporary, and western wear wasn't far behind as India ramped up its style game with e-commerce.

This was also the year that discerning shoppers prioritized quality and took the premium route to self-care. In 2023, premium styling products on Flipkart saw a 3X growth over 2022.

Grooming products made a splash with face care, hair care, and body care products stealing shoppers' attention throughout the year. Face care products were the most shopped-for, followed by hair care and body care.

#VocalforLocal: The rise of homegrown brands

Shopping trends of 2023 make it clear that Flipkart customers are rooting for Made in India products and homegrown brands. From stylish apparel to innovative gadgets, local brands are having a moment with online shoppers.

Cricket fever bleeds blue online, too

During the ICC Cricket World Cup, when the entire nation turned into a sea of blue, Flipkart witnessed a frenzy. Team India jerseys flew off from Flipkart sellers' shelves faster than sixes flying into the crowd!

Amidst the jersey-buying fest, one quirky search stood out, proving that Thala fans are a breed of their own. The quirkiest search on Flipkart was "Dhoni ka Bat", showcasing that the unwavering love for Captain Cool never fades.

Hottest gadgets on the block

Throughout 2023, India's shopping was fueled by searches for the latest tech. Bullet wireless headphones became the most sought-after tech product of the year.

The premium range of laptops saw a whopping 3.2X growth in sales. It doesn't stop there. Other premium tech products also experienced a 3X surge in sales. Driven by the millennial and Gen-Z desire to capture every thrill of their lives on the lens, the demand for action/adventure cameras soared 4X as compared to 2022. Tablets too saw a 100% growth in contrast to FY22.

India makes strides towards a healthier lifestyle

India was on a fitness roll as shopping trends in 2023 saw a surge in health-focused accessories and products. Cycles emerged as the most-shopped product under the fitness category, followed by

treadmills and dumbbells. Not just a metro trend, Berhampore, Puri, and Medinipur were the top tier-3 cities that shopped for these products in 2023.

As we step into 2024, only time will tell what you, our customers, prioritize, celebrate and go to bat for! No matter what it is, keep your wishlists ready and enjoy the unboxing.

A letter from Varanasi: Wishmaster Vishnu Kumar shares his #OneInABillion journey

Vishnu Kumar recalls his younger days spent along the river Ganga in Varanasi. A dreamer at heart, he credits the many poets that the city was and is home to for his love for words. As a Flipkart Wishmaster, Vishnu aims to make the city more of a home for himself and his family by building a house. Read on as he shares his #OneInABillion story.

I grew up here in Varanasi and live here with my father Vijay Kumar, mother Durga Devi and older brother Aditya. I graduated from Banaras Hindu University (BHU), with a B.A (Hindi honors). I went to a *rozgar mela*, found out about a vacancy in [Flipkart](#), and took up this job in first mile.

Varanasi is such a beautiful place, with the ghats, and the university (BHU). What I like the most about this place are the poets that are associated with this city, like Kabirdas, Tulsidas and Ravidas. They were social reformers who wrote about what they observed, not just what they imagined, and never discriminated against any set of people. I have read about them in college too. They've written such beautiful poems, and it makes me very happy to think that they might have written on these very ghats, while sitting on the banks and watching the boats go by.

Watch how individuals like Vishnu help fulfil India's Big Billion Dreams:

I have noticed that people can progress fast in the logistics sector, and also that there is a lot to learn. People tell you how to get better if you have doubts. They will explain it till you have fully understood it. I want to build my own identity in the e-commerce industry.

I have seen my manager Sunil Mishra. He has an idea of everything that is happening in Varanasi. I want to progress and become like him – I want to be an Area Manager one day.

There used to be *melas* when I was younger and I used to run around the fairs. I still have the same friends I had when I was younger, and we meet when we are all free. My Varanasi is also developing a lot. I have grown up running around on the ghats. Every time I had holidays or free days, I used to spend them on the ghats with my friends.

I used to write a little bit of poetry when I was in college, but the situation at home deteriorated. My father used to work at a factory, and quit when his health deteriorated. My brother Aditya drives a school bus, and my mother works in BHU.

I really wanted to be there for my family, and decided to start working. We were brought up with the idea that if you are a boy, you have to take care of your family. But I still read books – mostly poetry – when I find the time to.

I have been in Flipkart for 5 years and I've seen a lot of the past Big Billion Days. I really like it because there is so much energy, I sometimes lose track of time. We also have new people usually, so I enjoy teaching them, showing them the routes and other details. That makes me feel good.

In Varanasi, there are lots of people selling Banarasi sarees, and even electrical items on Flipkart. The sellers make sure they pack the products safely and hand it over to us. We scan them and then bring it to be sent to the rest of India.

I know one of the sellers and have observed his success. Earlier, only people in my neighborhood used to buy from him. But now his products get delivered all across India – it makes me also happy to see him progress!

I have thought about also becoming a Flipkart seller, along with what I do currently. Anything is possible with e-commerce.

My dream is to build my family a nice house, right here in Varanasi. They have sacrificed so much for me, and I wouldn't be here without them.

I want to live here since I love this city. As a resident, I welcome everyone to witness the magic of the ghats. And for anybody visiting Varanasi for the first time, I would recommend a visit to the Kachori gully, and also to have the city's famous *paan*!

From fashion in the metaverse to insurtech, Flipkart Leap Ahead finalists are innovating for India!

Catering to the vibrant and flourishing startup community in India, the Flipkart Leap Ahead program is underway for its second cohort. This Flipkart startup accelerator program provides entrepreneurs with all the tools they need not only to succeed in their own domain, but also positively impact the ecosystems in which they operate. Keep reading for insights from the promising band of entrepreneurs selected during the first cohort. Entries to the upcoming second cohort remain open until January 10, 2023.

Flipkart Leap Ahead

The world's third-largest startup ecosystem, India is irrefutably an innovation hub.

Enabling the vibrant startup community of the nation, initiatives like Flipkart Leap Ahead are key contributors, encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial innovation that ultimately propels the nation forward.

Flipkart Leap has two programs tailored to suit the needs of different startups. Flipkart Leap Ahead makes investments into pre-seed and seed stage companies through the Flipkart Ventures fund. Flipkart Leap Innovation Network enables commercial partnerships with startups building innovative products.

Flipkart Leap Ahead focuses on nurturing startups with not just equity investments, but also by opening doors to market access opportunities and acting as a catalyst for tech-powered advancements from India.

The founders who do make the cut truly share Flipkart's vision to build for India. Besides an investment in their enterprise, the program includes mentorship by Flipkart's top leaders, guided by a curriculum by Bain&Co aimed at helping them scale up.

Read on for insights from the founders of the first cohort of Flipkart Leap Ahead.

LogisticsNow – Raj Saxena, Founder & CEO

Flipkart Leap Ahead

Intended to serve as the digital backbone of logistics, LogisticsNow is technology-enabled transportation and logistics business. LoRRI, its flagship product, aims to revolutionize the B2B transport value chain powered by a vision to build a national logistics grid. "LoRRI's deep, data-based freight, intelligence and procurement solutions save on costs and time while enabling sustainability for shippers and carriers," explains Raj.

“Net Zero is not just a phrase for us. It is what has driven our business. Our intelligence platform provides the right truck type to the right network and capitalizes on market opportunity to not only transform this unorganized industry into one that reduces carbon emission but also unifies and optimizes transport movement.

With Flipkart understanding this problem and appreciating the magnitude of what a platform like LoRRI can do, we have received significant support and amazing encouragement from leadership.”

LivWell – Nikhil Verma, Co-Founder & CEO

Flipkart Leap Ahead

A revolutionary insurtech platform, LivWell offers micro-insurance policies and is a blockchain-based gamified health ecosystem. “LiveWell was created to make health, wellness and insurance relevant for Gen Zs and millennials so they could see the actual value of it,” says Nikhil. “LivWell is going to be an insurance company that reduces your premium as long as you remain healthy.

Before joining Flipkart, we were a part of two accelerator programs, and I must say that the Flipkart program was by far the best in terms of context, structure, mentors and experts. The extensive selection process was thoroughly enjoyable for us. Sometimes when you go through the grind and then make it, you realize the value of the opportunity. With insights from the Flipkart team, we’ve altered our approach towards the Indian market. Flipkart and the legal team have actually helped us set our house in order and set us up for success in the long term.”

Listen to the podcast with Raj Saxena and Nikhil Verma below:

Flipkart Studio 34 – Naye India Ka Naya Podcast · Insuring India, logical logistics & more – Episode 3 in the Flipkart Leap Ahead series

RightBot – Anurag Datta, Co-founder

Flipkart Leap Ahead

A startup focused on robotics and warehouse automation, Rightbot is a modern plug and play solution for commerce players. “RightBot robotic automation is essentially designed to improve effectiveness and productivity in warehouses. We are a full-stack solution which considers warehouses of different shapes and sizes,” says Anurag. “We make sure that we are not looking to replace warehouse workers but at increasing their productivity so that they can do their work more efficiently.

We are believed to be one of the very few companies who are trying to address some of the absolute core barriers to the adoption of robotics automation and emerging economics. Flipkart, similarly, is a pioneer in multiple ways and being a part of Leap Ahead has helped us immensely. We gained access to Flipkart's tech, business and commercial teams to discuss and explore synergies. We have got access to phenomenal mentors; for instance, the head of supply chain for Flipkart is our mentor and being able to sound out ideas with him is amazing."

Dopplr.digital – Sresht Agarwal, Co-founder & CEO

Flipkart Leap Ahead

Providing virtual immersive stores as service for brands, Dopplr is a fashion metaverse company. "While ecommerce has a lot of reachability and convenience, it takes away that experience of physical shopping, especially in the fashion segment. What we are doing with Dopplr is enabling shoppers to create their photorealistic digital twin and see how they look with digital copies of clothes," explains Sresht.

"This particular experience will then extend down into virtual stores with seamless integration. Here, you can be in the same place with your friends, see each other, check out how clothes look on each other and then decide if you want to make a purchase. The entire in-store experience is online, enabled by the connectivity that the web provides.

Flipkart Leap Ahead has exposed us to leaders who are building for this diverse ecosystem. Making sure we are exposed to them helped me think right and with the right mindset. We're a young startup and we need to be pushed to use a lot of tools. All this, when paired with the mentorship program, helped us see the future more clearly and set us on a direction towards growth.

SellerApp is a seller centric intelligence platform that empowers sellers to manage, optimize, and scale their businesses. "I think market intelligence is all about giving insights into a lot of critical metrics, which are important for sellers in terms of growth and scaling up," explains Dilip. "Brands should give supreme importance to all these metrics and business monitoring. As SellerApp, are working with more than 30,000 sellers to make sure that all these data points are available at their fingertips.

The Indian ecommerce story pretty much started with Flipkart, and we all are very inspired and proud of its success. Our journey with Flipkart Leap entailed relevant training and introduced us to members of the leadership team, so we could learn from real-life examples. We had very huge in-depth discussions related to ideation, market fit, business expansion. For me, the session which was on product market fit was really eye-opening. We are looking forward to implementing these learnings and grow more with insights from Flipkart."

NeuroPixel.AI – Arvind Nair, Co-founder

Flipkart Leap Ahead

NeuroPixel.AI is a deep tech startup at the intersection of fashion e-commerce and computer vision. “We offer the consumer the opportunity to see the apparel on a model that resembles them closer in terms of skin tone and size. It could meaningfully reduce return rates and has a whole lot of other benefits like increasing conversion rates on platforms,” says Arvind.

“That’s the idea of NeuroPixel.AI – to automate cataloging, which makes the whole process of enabling catalog, image-based personalization, and increasing the level of diversity and inclusivity on platforms a lot more cost-effective and affordable for brands. Flipkart leap has actually been incredible to us in terms of the expertise that they provided from various mentors within their ecosystem.

Between Flipkart and Myntra, we’re able to start working with the very best and biggest in India and this really sets us up well for our global ambitions. So, I think Flipkart Leap Ahead and programs like it are the reasons we exist and we’re so grateful to them for taking a bet on us.”

Listen to the podcast with Dilip Vamanan and Arvind Nair below:

Flipkart Studio 34 – Naye India Ka Naya Podcast · Disrupting the digital ecosystem in India – Episode 1 of The Flipkart Leap Ahead Accelerator Program

Serving as a platform to catalyze growth and share knowledge, the journey of the Flipkart startup accelerator program is just beginning. As we welcome the new year, the second cohort of Flipkart Leap Ahead is underway, and applications for game changing startups in the digital space are open until 10 January 2023.

Entrepreneurs looking to build for India by being a part of cohort 2 of the Flipkart Leap Ahead program can [click here](#) to access all the details.

Flipkart Awarded TAPA FSR 'A' Multi-Site Certification for 75 Fulfillment Centers

A prestigious certification by the Transported Asset Protection Association - Facility Security Requirement, Flipkart is the first company globally to be recognized with multisite 'A' accreditation for its 75 sites, and the only e-commerce company to receive the highest certification.

Certification

At Flipkart, our goal of making commerce accessible, reliable and affordable for India goes hand-in-hand with our commitment to uphold the security and integrity of the facilities that serve and connect customers and sellers across the country.

TAPA certification

(From left) Madu Lokan – Executive Director at TAPA Asia Pacific, Hemant Badri – Senior Vice President and Head of Supply Chain at Flipkart, Prabhakar Kolla – Vice President at Flipkart, Ratnakar Bade – Senior Director at Flipkart

In a testament to our efforts, Flipkart has recently become the first company globally to be recognised and awarded the prestigious Transported Asset Protection Association – Facility Security Requirement (TAPA FSR) multi-site certification for its 75 fulfillment centers. The certification makes Flipkart the only e-commerce company globally to receive a multisite 'A' accreditation, “elevated security protection” from the organization.

Since 2017, Flipkart has adopted the TAPA FSR standard as a benchmark for Security Risk Management across its warehouses. The certification recognizes and furthers our commitment to provide improved end-to-end supply chain solutions.

This certification — which also recognizes greater security for personnel as well as increased physical security of materials — is achieved by working with Independent Audit Bodies. It is a recognition of Flipkart's efforts towards ensuring the business continuity of its sites through effective program management and mobilization of its workforce for seamless operations.

TAPA certification

(From left) Jei Srihari – Director, Flipkart, Prabhu Balasrinivasan – Vice President, Flipkart, Sheetal Singh – Director, Flipkart, Mithu Ghose – Lead Auditor at DNV, Madu Lokan – Executive Director at TAPA Asia Pacific, Navath Pendurkar – Area Manager at DNV, Hemant Badri – Senior Vice President and Head of Supply Chain at Flipkart, Prabhakar Kolla – Vice President, Flipkart, Ratnakar Bade – Senior Director, Flipkart, Bhabajit Nandi – Senior Manager, Flipkart, Naveen Dave – Associate Director, Flipkart, Karthik Selvaraj – Director, Flipkart

“Being the only marketplace globally to receive the highest accreditation from TAPA APAC is an affirmation of our commitment to Risk Management Benchmarking through Global Standards & Certifications,” says Hemant Badri, Senior Vice President and Head of Supply Chain at Flipkart.

“Conscious efforts towards incorporating Risks Mitigation aspects across the value chain have been our top-most priority. As one of India’s homegrown e-commerce platforms, we are confident that this achievement will become an inspiration for many end-to-end supply chain companies to mirror efforts in ensuring the creation of a secure and resilient network in the country,” he adds.

While the certification will further strengthen the robust infrastructure needed across the country, it also enables us to create greater transparency, foster trust and protect the interests of the ecosystem and communities that we work with. It also provides an opportunity to generate skilled employment in the country to efficiently operate and work in tandem with the set benchmark.

Caravan of Joy: Creating access and opportunity in Jaisalmer

Into the desert, through forts, highways, lanes and bylanes, and streets with no names - within and beyond the golden city of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, a small Flipkart hub works to fulfill the dreams of thousands of Indians in the furthest reaches of the country, and delivers orders even to BSF camps along our borders. Here, e-commerce - via Flipkart's vast supply chain network and #BuiltForIndia technology - is opening up access not just to products that were out of reach, but also life-changing opportunities that were hard to come by.

Jaisalmer

From deserts to mountains, along seas and rivers, Flipkart delivers joy, access and convenience to the farthest reaches of India. Our vast supply chain network enables deliveries to 100% of India's serviceable PIN codes. It's a challenging task, but at Flipkart, we do it with pride for India.

Watch: Caravan of Joy – Flipkart delivers in Jaisalmer

YouTube player

In the western state of Rajasthan, where the magnificent Thar – one of the world's largest deserts – lies, the commitment of ensuring access, value and convenience comes with more challenges than just the terrain. And Jaisalmer, one of the state's largest cities, is located almost entirely within the desert.

As the city's population and limits expand, localities today dot the habitable parts of the Thar. "The market is very far from our village," says Aruna Kumari, a resident of Jaisalmer and now a proud Flipkart customer.

As the city grows, it becomes even more imperative for its residents to have everything they need at their fingertips. A small Flipkart hub in the city is working to make that a reality and ensure that no dream is too far for the many residents, even in the furthest reaches.

"We link small villages to the rest of India, and we go one step further to fulfill their needs," explains Shital Sharma, an executive at the Jaisalmer hub. "Our team of 15 to 18 people delivers between 700 to 800 orders every day."

The barren terrain is difficult to navigate, and the arid region is one of the hottest places in India – with the border outpost in Jaisalmer registering a scorching 52.4°C in the recent past. And when the sun sets, temperature extremes bring the mercury down to just 10°C or even lower during winters.

“We work hard in this difficult terrain so as not to disappoint our customers,” says Sunil Kumar, a wishmaster at the Flipkart hub in Jaisalmer.

Answering the call of the desert

“People in these parts never had access to so many products in the past. Flipkart has opened a whole new world to them,” explains Kamal Kishore, another wishmaster who works at the city’s small yet important hub.

This heartening development in Jaisalmer is also the result of built-for-India technology that makes the digital shopping experience as simple and seamless as possible. By removing language and affordability barriers, customers in this beautiful yet stark landscape can rely on variety and quality being delivered right to their doorstep.

These deliveries aren’t always easy. “Sometimes you get an incomplete address, sometimes just a name and colony. Many times the delivery is outside city limits. But we do our very best to deliver the order,” says Kamal.

Sometimes these deliveries are routed to a very special place – the Border Security Force (BSF) areas of Jaisalmer – catering to the brave men and women who stand guard at the border.

Empowering communities with opportunity

Flipkart’s vast supply chain, however, does more than empower residents of Jaisalmer to leverage the benefits of e-commerce.

“Flipkart has connected these far-flung villages to the mainstream and along with that also given opportunities for livelihood,” says Sunil, with his own story as a testament. “I lost my father to COVID-19. Suddenly, the responsibility of the entire family came on to me and my twin brother. I then happened to get a job at Flipkart and our financial situation got much better. “

Sunil isn’t the only one. “My father was a daily wage laborer who fell on hard times and was out of work. Today because of this job I was able to help my younger brother set up a shop and restart the education of my youngest brother,” says Kamal.

In Jaisalmer and surrounding areas, e-commerce via Flipkart’s vast supply chain network is opening up access not just to products that were out of reach, but also life-changing opportunities that were hard to come by.

As Sunil puts it: “We are not just delivering products but hopes, dreams and happiness to the families of our customers.”

In Jaipur, an entrepreneur rebuilds his family business via Flipkart Samarth

The pandemic lockdown dealt a severe blow to Pramod Kumawat's handicrafts business, leaving his family in despair as demand all but disappeared. However, driven by unwavering determination, Pramod delved into the world of e-commerce and became a part of the Flipkart Samarth program. Now, with a team of skilled artisans, they manufacture 3,000 frames daily, catering to both offline and online customers. Pramod's embrace of e-commerce not only revitalized their business but also empowered his team, creating a legacy rooted in adaptability and resilience. Read his inspiring story.

Flipkart Samarth seller

In this story: A small business leverages e-commerce via Flipkart Samarth to bounce back from the pandemic lull.

In the bustling city of Jaipur, Rajasthan, where art and culture blend harmoniously, there is a story interwoven with passion, determination, and the pursuit of dreams. At the heart of this tale stands a young entrepreneur, Pramod Kumawat, whose journey embodies the essence of resilience and the power of adaptation.

Pramod comes from a close-knit family – his parents and an elder brother, who works as a software engineer. After completing a BCom degree, Pramod had plans to pursue his Masters, but he yearned for a different path. He decided to follow in his father's footsteps of entrepreneurship and make a name for himself.

"My father has been successfully running a handicrafts business for 25 years, specializing in beautifully handcrafted decorative articles. We used to supply our products to wholesalers and also have a local shop serving tourists and locals," says Pramod.

Life was going smoothly for the Kumawat family until the sudden arrival of the pandemic lockdown. "The world changed, and our once busy market became empty. The pandemic hit us hard, leaving us feeling hopeless as demand for our products vanished, and our business struggled," adds Pramod.

After six months of struggle, when they finally managed to reopen their shop, they realized that it was challenging to revive their business. The market dynamics had changed, and they needed a fresh approach to adapt to the new normal. It was during this time that Pramod stumbled upon the idea of exploring e-commerce. In December 2020, Pramod onboarded Stuthi Arts on Flipkart via the Flipkart Samarth program.

Flipkart Samarth is a program introduced by Flipkart in 2019 to empower and uplift artisans, weavers, craftspersons, micro-entrepreneurs and more across India. It aims to promote inclusive growth by providing these individuals with a platform to display and sell their unique products to a pan-India audience. With a significant impact on over 1.5 million livelihoods, the program offers a range of advantages. It assists sellers in joining the platform, provides support for cataloging and imparts training on packaging and shipping. By doing so, Flipkart Samarth enables these sellers to actively participate in the digital marketplace.

Flipkart Samarth seller

With valuable insights from the Flipkart account manager, and determined to turn their fortunes around, Pramod, along with his parents, decided to start making handmade photo frames to sell online.

“Today, by God’s grace, we have grown so much. We have a team of 15 skilled workers with us and our own manufacturing unit with better equipment to enhance productivity. And I have honed my expertise in online sales,” says Pramod.

Each photo frame they produce is a result of meticulous craftsmanship. Today, the team creates around 3,000 frames every day which are sold both offline via their store as well as online. The popularity of their frames on Flipkart soared, with over a hundred units being sold daily.

“All our raw material is sourced from within India. At our manufacturing unit, we utilize our equipment to cut wood to the desired dimensions and then sand it for a smooth finish. The glass components are meticulously cut by hand by our dedicated craftspersons. While sourcing the materials can be time-consuming, the actual production process of the final product typically takes around 15 to 20 minutes.”

Pramod’s decision to chart his own path paid off. He transformed his family’s business, empowered his team, and created a legacy of his own. His story is an excellent example of how resilience, innovation, and the power of e-commerce can breathe new life into small businesses.

“We are eagerly waiting for this year’s Big Billion Days sale,” says Pramod. “We have hopes of achieving double the growth from last year’s BBD. We’ve completed all our preparations and now, it’s time to kick off the sale!”

Homegrown Happiness: How a Flipkart Seller's small business empowers rural artisans

Nilima Shaw left her job in Hyderabad to raise her newborn daughter. However, she soon felt the urge to start something of her own. With Flipkart by her side, she set up an independent business right from home. Today, she's a successful entrepreneur, offering livelihood opportunities to rural artisans, and building something for her daughter to be proud of. Read her story.

Hyderabad

On one hand, the City of Pearls, Hyderabad, is renowned for its jewelry, be it its historically significant Golconda diamonds or the exquisite bangles from Lad Bazaar that attract one and all even today. On the other, it is a booming IT and startup hub with offices ensconced in towering skyscrapers.

This city of contrasts and rich cultural heritage became home for Nilima Shaw from 2009 onwards, when she first stepped into the city to complete her MBA. Soon after, marriage and motherhood followed, and Nilima made a choice. "I wanted to give my daughter more time and prioritize her needs. So, I left my job. Today, Flipkart has given me time to be with my child, and at the same time, build a successful business."

Read to know how she built a brand of her own around her passion for artificial jewelry, joining lakhs of entrepreneurs from Hyderabad who harness e-commerce for growth.

Banking on passion

When her job as an HR consultant with a corporate firm in Hyderabad came in the way of caring for her daughter, Nilima made the decision to leave. But soon, the yearning to do something more arose again. Not finding satisfaction in any work-from-home positions, Nilima suddenly found inspiration.

"I had a huge collection of artificial jewelry and was really passionate about it and that's when my husband gave me the idea to sell on Flipkart. I learnt that the jewelry business is growing in India and is a huge market. So, in 2018, with mere savings of Rs.8,000, I started my business," she says.

Watch her story: Homegrown Happiness

YouTube player

The Big Billion Days effect

Though new to online retail, Nilima was a fast learner. "With Flipkart's support, I learnt how to list products on the platform. And soon, I received my first order. I still remember the feeling," she says.

Her brand, Nilu's Collection, offers a mix of modern and traditional designs, and more importantly, procures handmade products from artisans all across India. "If you are buying from Nilu's Collection, it is a motivation for me, but more importantly, for rural artisans who create them."

At first, orders trickled in slowly once or twice a week. "But when I participated in The Big Billion Days, I began to receive a hundred orders a day during every day of the sale. It was a turning point, and today, I get around 250 orders a day!"

"I am thankful to Flipkart for the kind of market visibility and platform it has given me. I wanted to make a mark, and Flipkart is helping me fulfill my dream at a national level."

An inspiration for her daughter

With her husband and family's support, her business has taken off, but for Nilima, success holds a special meaning.

"In India, women are so often discouraged from getting into business on their own. But I am trying to set a different precedent for my daughter. My hope is that seeing her mother work hard and manage several tasks together will inspire her to realize that women are born to lead. And if I can do that, I will have done my duty as a mother."

Rajkot Calling: Flipkart Seller Rashmi Wagerah reveals her no-holds-barred approach to success

Right before The Big Billion Days 2021, Rajkot-based Rashmi Wagerah is in all-hands-on-deck mode. Here's a look at her recipe for success catalyzed by Flipkart's wide array of growth tools built to empower Flipkart Sellers just like her.

Gujarat

There's nothing quite like a hot and fresh plate of just-fried farsan to epitomize the spirit of festive cheer. Be it sev from Ratlam, ganthiya from Bhavnagar, murukku from Tamil Nadu or chakli from Gujarat, these spicy, salty, crunchy snacks that symbolize joy and togetherness are enjoyed by households across the nation during the festive season. This is also the time that Flipkart Sellers get into high gear, busy laying the groundwork to meet the spike in demand that The Big Billion Days are known for.

Put snacking and festive preparation together, and one Indian state that simply cannot be overlooked is Gujarat. Home to more than 35,000 Flipkart Sellers, the Jewel of Western India sees frenetic activity all through this time of celebration.

One such Flipkart Seller making the most of e-commerce to give wings to her dreams is Rashmi Manojbhai Wagerah. This Rajkot native makes her splash with the very appliance that helps Indian kitchens produce festive snacks that are enjoyed with relish. One of the most popular products that her company, Sara Business Group, is known for is the kitchen press, also known as the sev machine. Gearing up for The Big Billion Days 2021, Rashmi too is putting her best foot forward to meet the demand from prospective shoppers all over India, including her native Gujarat.

GROWTH THAT SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

Gujarat

It was only in 2018 that Rashmi started her online business. In just three short years, her company has made a name for itself by manufacturing and procuring kitchenware, household appliances, décor, fittings, and more. Not one to let opportunities go to waste, Rashmi is a Flipkart Seller who operates in both B2B and B2C arenas.

"Initially we were only dealing with online wholesalers and would sell our products to them. However, we soon launched our own Flipkart Store and started reaching out to consumers directly. We have been working relentlessly via two channels and processing a huge number of orders per day," she says.

Rashmi's sincere efforts have yielded equally fascinating results. "Business is good with Flipkart," she says with characteristic modesty. "Sales have increased about 1000% in the last three years."

TOOLS OF THE ONLINE TRADE

Incorporating the feedback she receives from customer reviews as well as guidance from Flipkart's account managers, who offer regular operational support and business counselling, Rashmi acts swiftly. "We keep an eye on product ratings and improve our products or packaging whenever needed. When we realized that a few attachments in our bestselling sev maker were not useful to online customers, we removed them and offered others that were in demand."

Her no-holds-barred approach has paid off. Today, Rashmi's enterprise employs 15 people. The COVID-19 pandemic too bolstered demand in online shopping, and the renewed interest in at-home cooking placed her in the right position to tap into growth. "The number of orders we received per day has increased exponentially post COVID-19. Before the pandemic, our orders averaged 50 a day and after that 800 a day became a norm," she says.

For the past year or so, Rashmi has focused her attention on Flipkart as a marketplace. "I get more customers here, and when I have a question, I can directly contact someone to get my problem solved," she explains.

THE FLIPKART BOOST

To support Flipkart Sellers like Rashmi, growth tools like the next-day payment program play a vital role.

As part of the Growth Capital seller financing program, Flipkart also helps sellers get customizing offerings from lenders based on business projections. It is this availability of funds that helps micro-enterprises boost their supply to meet the skyrocketing demand during events like The Big Billion Days. The expansion of Flipkart's warehouse facility in Gujarat along with four new supply chain facilities further helps businesses.

Rashmi too is set to race ahead and break all past records. "As a run-up to The Big Billion Days, I have also started sourcing products to ensure availability of stock and aim to receive about 4,000 orders this year during the festive season."

#Selfmade: From 5 orders to 700 orders a day, this woman entrepreneur says Flipkart was the best business decision!

When her electronics business wasn't picking up on her own website, Chitra Vyas turned to Flipkart to improve her sales. Soon after, her business saw a surge in customer orders. Even when COVID-19 struck, she was able to adapt and thrive. Read on to find out how this ambitious seller, who started small, went on to win the "Best Entrepreneur" award.

entrepreneur

My name is Chitra Vyas. I became a Flipkart seller 5 years ago. I started my journey as an entrepreneur selling electronics. My husband previously worked in the e-commerce industry so there was little doubt that we wanted to sell online.

We needed an investor and we didn't have to look far. My uncle invested in the business and soon, we had our own website to sell our products. But we didn't have the right guidance in giving our products visibility in the market. That's when we turned to Flipkart. Pooling our resources together, we hoped to see better results.

entrepreneur

Soon after joining Flipkart, we saw a surge in sales. Within a week, we got 100 orders! Flipkart gave us the guidance we needed to broaden our customer base. An account manager was assigned to help us with our business and he advised us to start adding more categories to our listings. That's when we decided to start exploring our opportunities in the fashion category.

Our account manager was thorough — he prepped us for The Big Billion Days sale and showed us how to restock our inventory to keep up with the flurry of orders placed by Flipkart customers. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic took its toll on our business, he was hands-on when we had to get our sales back on track. The account managers at Flipkart are very helpful and an important aspect of selling on Flipkart — if we get stuck somewhere, or if there is any issue, we just message them and they're there to help.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Flipkart gave us assurance. Our primary category at the time was footwear and we had only just begun to sell dry fruits in the food and nutrition section.

Before the lockdown, we were getting 20-30 orders for dry fruits while most of our sales came from footwear. But that changed after COVID-19 — we were worried about our footwear category and how our business would survive. But Flipkart gave us insights on the dry fruits and ration category. On the first day after lockdown, we got 400-500 orders for our dry fruits!

We now also do the packaging and have started our own brand of dry fruits called SoftArt. This is just one example of the many opportunities that Flipkart has given us. Even when lockdown restrictions prevented us from handing over products to Flipkart logistics, they went out of their way and picked it up from our home.

entrepreneur

In the past 6 months, even members of my family who had never shopped online have started buying essentials and other products with the help of e-commerce. Online shopping is the best and safest solution now for both businesses and customers alike.

To any budding entrepreneur at a time like this, I would say that all you need is the right guidance, like how we got from Flipkart, and you will flourish as an online seller!

I never imagined I'd become such a successful entrepreneur. I was awarded "Best Entrepreneur" among Flipkart's women sellers two years ago. It's a nice feeling when you start with five orders and now you receive 700 orders every day. We started small and now we have an entire office. We are still enjoying the journey.

Runner, entrepreneur, mother: Flipkart Seller Dipti Chadha's unstoppable journey

After years of focusing on nurturing her family, Dipti Chadha found herself drawn towards a new horizon — the path of entrepreneurship. Dipti's zeal and resourcefulness led to her taking her husband's business online, bringing in not just success but also the satisfaction of following her dreams, all while supporting her family. Read her story.

Entrepreneur

Jalandhar, a bustling city in the northern state of Punjab, is known for its rich cultural heritage and thriving commercial activities – mainly leather and sports goods. The city, with its blend of tradition and modernity, is the ideal backdrop for Dipti Chadha's journey of homemaker to entrepreneur.

Born and raised in Patiala and married to a man from Jalandhar, Punjab, for long, Dipti's life revolved around taking care of her family. Often, her own dreams buried and on the back burner. "I did a double post-graduation in commerce and was always interested in working so that I could contribute to the economy," Dipti recalls. "But I got married right after my studies, luckily to someone from a business family. However, my in-laws were not really into the idea of me getting into the workforce. So it took me many years before I could pursue what I wanted to."

It was during the COVID-19 lockdown that Dipti began to nurture the idea of becoming an entrepreneur. "During the lockdown, while everyone was exploring new avenues of creativity, I was observing how small businesses were taking root online. I liked the idea and I also did not want to live with regrets about what I could have done with my life. So I made a plan and decided to follow my dreams of becoming an entrepreneur, and discussed it with my husband Nitush," she fondly recollects.

Entrepreneur

Dipti's ambition equals Nitush's boundless zest for life, forging a dynamic collaboration fueled by determination and passion. Dipti recalls, "My drive to do something in life coupled with his strong support propelled me forward". Fast forward to today, Dipti is an entrepreneur in her own right and runs the e-commerce vertical of her husband's 25-year-old footwear business, bringing in an annual turnover of over Rs. 50 crore.

"I started with Flipkart. I was anxious in the beginning and my orders were 4 to 5 in the initial days. I gathered more insights and marketing strategies from my Flipkart account manager to scale my business. In just a few months, it grew to 400 to 500 orders a day and now it stands at 1000 to 1400 orders a day," Dipti beams with excitement. "I still remember the first day I received more than 1000 orders – I celebrated like anything! It was a dream come true."

Dipti also discovered the potential that Flipkart's Big Billion Days could have on her business. However, this was soon after she onboarded to Flipkart in late 2021. She realized that time was short to fully utilize the opportunity and prepared for the following year. Armed with the knowledge she gained from her account manager and support from her team members, she powered through, pulling in orders in thousands.

"I was not expecting this peak in orders. It was challenging. But my team stood by me, cooperating and working night shifts to help get the orders out. I realized in the midst of it all that if we want to, we can. The team work was amazing!" Dipti explains.

Dipti ensures she has a good understanding of what customers want and what they appreciate about the products. "Whenever I open my seller portal, I always go through customer ratings and reviews. And most of the time it's positive. They often call out how the footwear is of great quality and are affordable. I also love going through their shared pictures and videos. It's inspiring in itself."

Recalling her conversation with her Flipkart account manager, she says, "One of the crucial lessons I learnt was that if the products have uncompromised quality, customers always return for more. And we provide just that."

Entrepreneur

Not only are Dipti and Nitush partners in business, they also inspire each other to focus on their wellbeing, and share a passion for running. Dipti and her husband embraced running as a shared hobby, making it an integral part of their daily routine. Their joint efforts led them to participate in numerous races, where Dipti distinguished herself by earning multiple medals.

Reflecting on their running endeavors, Dipti acknowledges the competitive spirit between them on the track, pushing each other to excel. "Running alongside Nitush has been an exhilarating experience. We challenge each other, driving ourselves to new heights," she remarks.

Together, Dipti and Nitush have three children. "My two teenage daughters and young son need my time and attention. Despite a hectic schedule, I prioritize assisting them in getting ready for school and strive to carve out quality time for them every day after work. Being my own boss enables me to better manage my time, ensuring both my personal and professional responsibilities are well met."

"As a woman," Dipti says, "the responsibilities are sky high. It's challenging but that's the thing – I love challenges."

Drawing from her own experience, Dipti adds, “To all women and girls out there: there’s no room for regrets! You’ve got the power to make things happen. You just need to start small, start somewhere – everyone does. There will be failures along the way but embrace them; they’re just stepping stones. Keep pushing forward. Just never stop. You’ve got this!”